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Letter dated 26 September 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to refer to the letter of the Permanent Representative of Turkey dated 19 September 1997 (A/52/383-S/1997/732) and draw your attention to the unacceptable threat of the use of force by Turkey against Cyprus.

In that letter, the Permanent Representative of Turkey expresses the position and concern of his country over the decision of the legal and internationally recognized Government of Cyprus to purchase the S-300 missile system, maintaining, inter alia, that it "constitutes a direct threat" to the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey itself, and "will exacerbate the existing tension in the island, and also create instability in the region, thus further complicating the efforts aimed at finding a solution to the Cyprus question".

In the face of the Turkish invasion and continuing occupation of 37 per cent of the territory of Cyprus, with all the tragic consequences for the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots alike, it is really astonishing that Turkey now presents itself as concerned about the security and stability in the region.

It is Turkey itself that is the real threat to Cyprus, the Turkish Cypriots and the peace and security in the region, through its expansionist policy and aggressive action. Moreover, it is well known that it is the Turkish side that by its prolonged intransigence and negative attitude undermined all efforts for finding a solution to the Cyprus problem.

The Turkish Permanent Representative by his letter also reminds the members of the Security Council of their "political and moral responsibilities for the preservation of international peace and security".

Turkey, however, has never fulfilled its own political and moral responsibilities arising from its membership in the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other international organizations. It has never respected the repeated calls and demands of the Security Council, contained in numerous resolutions, all of which have been flagrantly ignored and remain unimplemented by the Turkish side.

For exclusively defensive purposes, the Government of Cyprus proceeded with its decision to purchase the S-300 missile system, following the repeated threats by Turkey against Cyprus. Under Article 51 of the Charter, it is the right and the duty of the independent and sovereign Republic of Cyprus to take all necessary steps for its adequate defence, when the occupied part of Cyprus has become one of the most militarized areas in the world, as described in your reports, and when Cyprus is under direct military threat of Turkey.

It is ludicrous to believe that small Cyprus, with no air force, can possibly pose a threat to a major military power such as Turkey. The S-300 ground-to-air missiles can only be used for defensive purposes against incoming attacking aircraft.

I should like, in this respect, to refer to the proposal by President Clerides for the complete demilitarization of the Republic of Cyprus, which has not as yet been accepted by Turkey. I should like also to point out that the deployment of the missiles will not be necessary if substantial progress in the efforts for finding a solution to the Cyprus problem is achieved. As is well known, the Turkish side has impeded such progress, as reflected in the recent statement to the press by the President of the Security Council, on 20 August 1997.

The letter of the Turkish Permanent Representative ends with an unmistakably clear and direct threat against Cyprus, that Turkey "will take corresponding measures", which amounts to a threat of the use of force, contrary to the rules of international law and in particular Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations. The only "corresponding measures" familiar to Turkey are resort to violence and the use of force.

I wish to strongly protest this most blatant threat of the use of force by Turkey and its escalating aggressive attitude and actions against the Republic of Cyprus.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nicos AGATHOCLEOUS
Ambassador
Permanent Representative